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INDUCTION IN THE TEACHING OF LATIN DECLENSION

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In *The Teaching of Latin and Greek*, Professor Bennett takes up the cudgels in defense of the older type of beginning work, based on a systematic study of the grammar, as against the type which is prevalent today, and which is represented, with more or less variety in detail, by nearly all standard books. It is the purpose of this paper to consider his essential criticisms, to investigate their validity, and to suggest a procedure in accord with them, so far as they may be found valid.

Mr. Bennett describes the older method in the following words (pp. 51-52):

Twenty years ago the pupil usually began with the Latin Grammar and the Latin Reader. The Grammar served to give the facts of pronunciation, accent, declension, conjugation, etc., while the Reader gave parallel exercises illustrative of the parts of the Grammar assigned from day to day. The development naturally followed the arrangement of the Grammar, i.e., the pupils were taught the five declensions in succession, then the adjective, pronouns, and the four conjugations. During the acquisition of the forms little attention was paid to syntax. Only a few indispensable principles of the most elementary kind were introduced at this stage, such as the rules for the predicate noun, appositive, subject, object, agreement of adjective with noun, etc. After the acquisition of the forms, and before the commencement of the regular reading of a continuous text, the beginner's attention was directed to the elementary syntactical principles of the language. Here again the Grammar was used as the basis of instruction, and the different constructions studied were accompanied by parallel illustrative sentences in the Reader. Like the study of the forms, the study of the syntax followed the order of the Grammar, i.e., all the constructions of one case were treated together, and all the case constructions preceded the constructions of mood and tense.

The aim of such study is not clearly stated, but it is evident from incidental remarks. On p. 52 he states as among the "excellent results" of this method the fact that "boys learned their forms with accuracy, they early became familiar with the Grammar"

(the capital shows that he means the particular formulation of the grammar set forth in the standard texts), "and so laid a solid foundation for future work." Previously, on p. 50, he identifies failure "to become well grounded in the elements of Latin" with failure "to secure an accurate knowledge of forms and of the leading principles of syntax." Perhaps we should not too much insist in this connection upon his criticism of continuous composition and of the ability to read Latin without translating, as results of little value; but the fact is certainly suggestive, as showing his conception of the aim in beginning Latin; that it is primarily the mastery of a mechanical process of eliciting the English sentence from the Latin sentence; that its tools are word-meanings, inflected forms, and rules of syntax; that its tool-chest is the grammar and the dictionary.

Mr. Bennett then characterizes rather cursorily the type of beginning book which had displaced the older reader:

Today the use of the Grammar and Reader as above described is a thing of the past. For two decades the beginner's book has been coming into more and more general use, until today its reign is universal. These books are usually complete in themselves. They contain all the grammar supposed to be essential for the beginning pupil, along with copious illustrative sentences. Representing as they do, also, a reaction against the old Reader with its isolated words and detached phrases, they introduce complete sentences at the start. This is accomplished by treating certain parts of the verb in the very earliest lessons. . . .

Most of these manuals are absolutely without plan in their distribution of material. Bits of the noun, adjective, adverb, verb, and pronoun are found scattered here and there throughout the book interspersed with various syntactical rules, now on the noun, now on the verb, now on one case, now on another.

Judging by the aim which Mr. Bennett conceives as the true one, this method has proven decidedly inferior to the old. The pupils are "conspicuously inferior in the mastery of their inflections to the pupils of twenty years ago [i.e., in the late seventies], as well as conspicuously inferior in their general familiarity with the Latin Grammar." Mr. Bennett does not attempt to judge the results by any other aim. The nearest he comes to it is a quasi-admission that the older method was "irrational"; i.e., unpsy-

chological. I think it will be granted that it was, in the light of a restatement of the aims of beginning Latin study, which I now take the liberty of making:

First, the primary aim in beginning Latin is to develop the power of reading, with accuracy and fluency.

Second, the acquisition of a vocabulary, of the knowledge of syntax, and of the mastery of forms are secondary desiderata. They are purely means to the primary end, so far as beginning Latin is concerned, though they are within certain limits indispensable means.

Third, translation furnishes the most convenient test of the ability to read, and throughout the high-school course it is increasingly useful, independently of that, for the training it may be made to give in the use of English.

Fourth, Latin composition is valuable as conferring drill in vocabulary, forms, and syntax. Its value apart from this is small. The same may be said of the value of quizzes and drills, including formal inflection.

It think that this statement of the aims in beginning Latin will be accepted in the main, and that it has the advantage of furnishing the most valuable central motive, and of giving room to adjust the minor motives and the exercises according to the criterion of their influence in relation to the central aim. The difference between this statement and my inferential formulation of Mr. Bennett's view is largely one of emphasis.

History has decided somewhat against Mr. Bennett's position, in the continued rejection of the type of beginning book which he favors; though that which he opposed, and which, when he wrote these words, had wholly superseded the older form, has been slightly modified, partially in the direction which he advocated. Still more in his favor, the so-called inductive methods, exhibiting in the extreme the faults which he criticizes, have almost universally been judged unsuitable. For the sake of convenience, I here summarize his criticisms of both these types of books:

The newer methods separate things which logically belong together, in any systematic presentation of the facts and principles of the Latin language.

The newer method separates things which must later be associated. As stated, this is a criticism of the *psychological* rather than the *logical* validity of the methods in question. I shall later attempt to show it to be true in the former sense; though, as Bennett elaborates it, it is practically a repetition of the previous count.

The so-called inductive methods are not only open to the foregoing objections, but are not even logically inductive.

I wish to criticize both systems, and shall consequently take the liberty of restating the objections as admitted or alleged by Bennett, with such particularization as seems valuable for my purpose. I shall confine my attention also, for the sake of conciseness, to the one point of declension.

First, the grammar method was unpsychological, in that it furnished at the outset a group of declined forms, outside the pupil's experience, and required them to be memorized. The book of the current type has usually made no correction of this defect, which is inherent in the system of formal declension as an initial process.

Second, the grammar method furnished the pupil with an a-priori set of ready-made English prepositional phrases as translations of the Latin oblique cases. This was done in the attempt to couple the forms on to the pupil's experience; but it usually failed to do so, because in his experience these prepositional phrases occurred as integral parts of sentences, varying amazingly in value according to their context; while in the declensions they appear as pawns of a fixed value, and the attempt to use them is nearly always mechanical, resulting in stiffness at the best, and grotesque distortion of the sense at the worst. In other words, *this method forms mechanical and unreliable associations between Latin declension-forms and English phrases.* The newer type of book has usually failed to remedy this defect also.

Third, the grammar method forms false contiguity-associations through the memorizing of paradigms by rote in the usual fashion. The pupil learns to associate the nominative of a given word with the genitive, the genitive with the dative, etc.; a connection which he can never by any possibility use in the interpretation of Latin discourse. This is partly obviated by reading the paradigms

horizontally instead of vertically; but a great deal of the evil still remains. It is very difficult to avoid the result so long as formal declension is the initial process.

Fourth, the books of the newer type, by separating the different declensions, bring it about that the forms of one declension become automatic before the next is taken up. It then becomes necessary for the pupil to unlearn a given case-form, and acquire another, often totally unlike it. The disposition to write *ducorum* for *ducum*, *hostum* for *hostem*, *dio* for *die*, and to regard *Caesari* as a genitive, are all exceedingly common, and all alike point to distortions inherent in a system which makes the pupil think *rum* for the genitive plural for so many weeks, and then without warning to drop the *r*, and think *um* only.

Fifth, the books of the newer type, by introducing adjectives of the first and second declensions along with nouns of the same declensions, create automatic associations between forms of the same declension, which are exceedingly hard to dislodge in favor of cross-associations between declensions.

Sixth, the so-called inductive method is not logically inductive, because, as hitherto applied, it does not cover the whole field of typical instances.

Before proceeding to attempt the outlining of a method of attacking declension which shall aim to obviate these defects, I may be permitted a few remarks on the meaning of induction as an educative process, particularly in Latin. Many textbook-makers have taken up the catchword *induction* as a popular thing, and have failed to see its real meaning in education. The logical process of induction is the one which they had in mind, and it is that which they have (often lamely) incorporated into their Latin methods. As a matter of fact, pure induction in the technical logical sense of the term rarely occurs as more than a momentary process, even in original scientific investigation. It is continually checked up and combined with the critical application of deduction, and indeed would be of little value if this were not the case. But induction in the psychological and educational sense of the word consists in the incorporation of new material into the thought and activity of the pupil in terms of previous experience, as con-

trasted with the distinct break in development caused by the introduction of new material *a priori*, unrelated to previous experience, and requiring to be handled according to internal principles of its own. The "inductive" method first connects with previous experience, and systematizes later; the "deductive" method delivers the systematized knowledge in greater or less bulk to the pupil, and connects it later with previous experience.

It will be seen that the so-called inductive methods have mostly violated the principles of real educational induction by attacking a *material* which was outside the pupil's experience, while at the same time concerning themselves with a *form* whose mastery is conceded to be unsurpassed for difficulty in all our high-school curriculum. It is impossible to attend closely and simultaneously to both form and content; and these methods have met with little favor, except at the hands of teachers of unusual insight and skill, whose own qualities contributed that which overcame the defects of the books, and deluded them into enthusiasm for the method, to which they wrongly attributed the excellent results. On the other hand, the books of the current type, while preserving both the piecemeal order which Bennett condemns, and the *a priori* presentation of forms which he supports, have thrown a sop to current educational prepossessions by a pretended inductive process of obtaining rules of syntax; which process consists in giving one or more passages of Latin illustrating the point in question, telling the pupil to "observe that so-and-so is the case," and then stating the rule for him. Now it is perfectly safe to say that so far as the pupil is concerned there is in nine cases out of ten no induction whatever in this process. The pupil reads the matter over, refers to the illustrative sentences *purely to determine the meaning of the terms used in the rule*, and then commits the rule to memory. This at the best; at the worst—but we mercifully draw the veil. The whole process is as purely *a priori* as the learning of a paradigm.

Do not understand me to say that I condemn deductive processes, either logical or psychological, in the study of Latin. There are some forms and constructions, such as the simple passive, the dative of possession, the deponents, and the second periphrastic, which are so alien to our methods of expression that the most

economical way of learning them is simply to accept them on faith, and drill on them until they become automatic. Explanation of their origin and the presentation of English analogies (which can often be found) are of course valuable; but the teacher should not delude himself that he is proceeding inductively to any worthy extent, and particularly he should not insist upon *every pupil's* seeing the point, if he wants ever to get through the course. This concession, however, to the occasional necessity of *ego dico* procedure does not affect my general position: *that Latin is on the whole as susceptible as any other subject of a treatment which shall base the successive steps upon previous experience, elicit self-activity, and postpone systematization until the pupil can profitably make it for himself.*

As applied to declension, such a method should in my opinion, in order to eliminate the defects which I have pointed out in current methods, be characterized by the following features:

First, *it should introduce the forms in such a way as to give them an initial setting in the pupil's linguistic experience.* Only so can a truly inductive course be followed; and this condemns formal declension as an initial process *in toto*.

Second, the range of declensional forms introduced should be such as to secure ready cross-association between declensions, in as great variety as is likely to be encountered in the text of the high-school authors. This means that *all declensions must be introduced from the very first*, and supports Bennett's condemnation of the piecemeal presentation now all but universal.

Third, when the pupil is ripe for generalization, and not before, formal declension must be introduced; and *it must begin by the pupil's collecting for himself from known sentences, and arranging in a paradigm, all the forms of a given noun.* After verification, the paradigms so formed may be memorized.

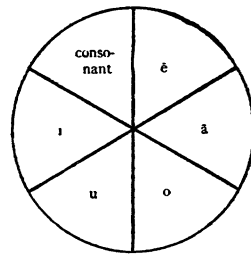
The method as pursued in my classes for the past two or three years proceeds substantially as follows: The class, in as many preparatory lessons as may be found necessary, is brought face to face with the syntactical devices of English, and is led to see and formulate the proposition that, in English, sentence relation is shown chiefly by word-order; next to that, by the use of relation-

words—prepositions, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs; and thirdly, by word-form. His attention is then turned to Latin sentences, whose translations are given, and which differ in only one point; namely, that a noun which is the subject in the first sentence changes uses in the second sentence with a noun which was the object in the first. The two nouns are chosen in different declensions, and in the masculine (or feminine) singular. Two generalizations are aimed at: one, *that form in Latin is the chief index of use*; the other, *that the direct object of a verb, if in the masculine or feminine singular, ends in a short vowel followed by "m."* The accusative is chosen here because of its comparative uniformity.

A reading lesson follows, in which masculine and feminine nouns of *all declensions* are introduced in the accusative singular. Adjectives in the nominative and accusative are also introduced, but in such a position that analysis of their inflection is not essential to interpretation of the sentence. The next step is to call attention to the distinction between the stem and the sign of the construction; and when the idea of the stem is clearly grasped, the pupil is ready for the classification of stems. This is taken up after another lesson, in which the pupil has been introduced to the forms of the accusative plural, masculine and feminine. These forms serve as a convenient basis for the stem groupings, which the pupil is required to make by selection. His grouping is then corrected by reference to the following table and diagram:

CLASSES OF NOUN STEMS

Stem Characteristic	Noun (Nominative)	Stem
ē	diēs	diē
ā	fossa	fossā
o	lēgātus	lēgāto
u	passus	passu
i	nāvis	nāvi
consonant	mīles	mīlit



The purpose of this diagram is partially to explain the order in which the types of stem are arranged, as placing each type next to the two which are most like it.

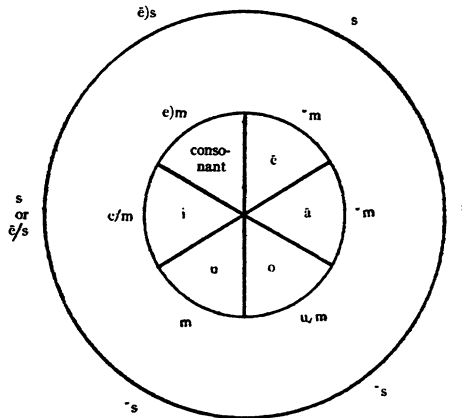
The next step is to collate from known sentences two forms of

the accusative (one singular and one plural) representing each several type of stem, in the masculine or feminine gender. When this is done, it is verified by reference to the following table:

PARADIGM OF DIRECT OBJECT FORMS, *M* and *F*
(Accusative Case)

Stem Characteristics	Singular (adds <i>-m</i>)	Plural (adds <i>-s</i>)
<i>ē</i>	aciem	aciēs
<i>ā</i>	fossam	fossās
<i>o</i>	virum	virōs
<i>u</i>	passum	passūs
<i>i</i>	nāvem	nāvīs, nāvēs
consonant	mlitem	mlitēs

Accompanying this is the following diagram for reference:



The inner circle represents the stem characteristic; the next, the signs and stem changes for the singular; the outer, the same for the plural. The sign of short or long quantity before an indicated construction sign is self-explanatory. A vowel before the bar / indicates the result of a change in the stem characteristics. A vowel to the left of the curve) is to be inserted between the stem and the indicated construction sign. This case-paradigm, as I make bold to call it, is memorized, and constant drill is given in the process of using it to construct the accusative forms of other masculine and feminine nouns, the stem in each instance being

supplied at first by the teacher. Composition employing the accusative is required from an early period. When the forms of the accusative are fairly fixed, the other cases are introduced in order and handled likewise, in the following order: (1) the nominative, masculine and feminine; (2) the nominative and accusative, neuter; (3) the genitive (in connection with a method for determining stems); (4) the ablative; (5) the dative.

It is evident that the preparation and memorizing of these six tables, and the mastery of the process of using them, puts within the pupil's reach *every regular substantive and adjective form in the Latin language*; but with the following modifications:

First, he must notice (and memorize, if permanency is desired) the *vocabulary forms* of each word he encounters.

Second, he must master definite *methods of determining the stem* from the vocabulary forms.

Third, certain *regular differences* in the behavior of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns must be learned. The demonstrative genitive in *ius* and dative in *ī* may conveniently be learned here.

Fourth, some very *common irregular words must be learned outright*, including *domus* and *vīs* among nouns, the reflexive and relative pronouns, *is* and *īdem*, *hīc*, etc.

Fifth, the *vocative and locative must be learned outright*.

All these special qualifications of the method above outlined must be learned in any case, so that they must here be taken up merely from a point of view different from the usual one. After the mastery of all the *regular* forms (points 1 and 2 above) of the language from this point of view, the process of formal declension is easily mastered; first, by collating and arranging in the usual paradigmatic order all the forms of some familiar noun. After verification, this paradigm, *produced by the pupil*, is memorized as the type of the particular declension to which it belongs. The other declensions are then taken up in rapid succession, to avoid the fixation of one set of forms to the detriment of others. One masculine (or feminine) and one neuter of each type of stem—ten nouns in all—is regarded as sufficient. As soon as the method of making declensions is familiar to the pupil, he is given a noun with a qualifying adjective to decline; taking care to select them from

different declensions, so as to preserve intact the cross-associations between declensions. The pupil never needs special drill on a noun-adjective paradigm with both in the same declension.

This, in brief, is the method, so far as it is peculiar and applies to declension. There are many minor details which I have not thought necessary to discuss. Its theoretical advantages are: that it is not mechanical, but is consistently and strongly productive of self-activity on the part of the pupil; that it secures direct association, immediately interpretable, between word-form and sentence structure; that one set of forms in the process of becoming automatic does not block the way for other forms which have to be learned later; and that words in the same case become associated, rather than words in the same declension. Its practical results, after three years of partial use, and a year and a half of exclusive use, would be difficult to determine, without an investigation from unbiased sources, conducted with critical accuracy. I may be permitted to summarize my personal impressions. The chief result which I attribute to it is *skill and naturalness in reading Latin*, as manifested by an easy and spirited style in translation; and a readiness and accuracy in the writing of Latin, which I attribute in part to the fact that composition is wholly original. Preparation for Caesar is made in decidedly less time than formerly. A deficiency in the fluency of formal declension I attribute largely to certain extrinsic conditions which have discouraged the devotion of a due proportion of the time to drill. I should welcome an investigation, and propose myself to study, from material which I have collected, the effect upon range of vocabulary and syntax, and upon errors in general.